

HPOC MEETING Q&A
December 4, 2003

- 1. When I identify myself as an IC HPOC, it doesn't seem to make much impact with CIT. How is triage conducted?**

CIT Level 1 will create a Remedy Ticket and assign it immediately to the NBS Level 2. If no one in Level 2 is available, Level 3 will be contacted.

- 2. Does the Nov. 17, 2003 update to travel over the International Dateline apply to lodging and meals?**

Yes. But for trips earlier than that, you must follow the instructions (sent in email dated Nov. 19, 2003) to correct it.

- 3. With regard to international travel, if the last day in the air is equivalent to $\frac{3}{4}$ day per diem, are there any meals?**

For the last day of travel in the air, just take the lodging away, but keep the $\frac{3}{4}$ M&IE.

- 4. Why was it possible for a Reviewer to inadvertently approve a document?**

Originally, Reviewers were given the same permission level as Planners. However, some ICs temporarily gave Reviewers the same permission level as Approvers. We hope to have a specialized Reviewer permission level (0-3) in the near future which will separate their duties from both the Planners and Approvers.

- 5. Should a sponsored in-kind expense be documented as reimbursable?**

The payment method for in-kind expenses should be In-Kind. Keep in mind that from the accounting code perspective, all services provided by the sponsor, while they do not show up as expenses flowing through Finance, require the use of the reimbursable CAN/Project for in-kind expenses by the sponsor.

- 6. How is the IC Director electronic routing working?**

It is being tested at this time and an email communications will follow when it is finalized.

- 7. Why shouldn't an in-kind lodging expense read \$0?**

You need to put in the amount from the actual bill for tracking purposes. Type in the government rate and save. Or for AEA, use the actual expense which may be higher or lower than the government rate.

- 8. Should I check the Final Voucher checkbox before forwarding the document to my AO?**

Unless the Planner plans on preparing a second or subsequent voucher for the same trip, he/she should always check the final voucher checkbox before routing. If the Planner forgets or the box becomes unchecked (which frequently happens when there is a Reviewer in the routing list), both Reviewers and Approvers are able to check that checkbox before applying the approve stamp.

9. If I do not check the Final Voucher checkbox, will the Traveler receive his reimbursement?

Yes, the checkbox means that any unused portion of the authorization is de-obligated and returned to the appropriate CAN for future use. The NBS Team is currently trying to do something programmatically to correct the many vouchers that should have been “Final Vouchered”.

10. If a ticket is lost, can you still Final Voucher?

Since there may be several different circumstances surrounding the loss of a ticket, Planners are advised to contact the Help Desk to complete the travel process.

11. If you use AEA or anything different from the government allowance, will it always fail the pre-audit?

Yes. Keep in mind the word “fail” does not always mean something is wrong, it can just be an alert to reviewers/approvers that a condition exists.

12. Can you change the purpose of a trip on an Amendment?

No, because the pull down menu does not show up.

13. Why haven't a number of our travelers been paid yet?

The NBS Team is working with OFM on an error listing of Travel Authorizations and Vouchers reflecting approximately 12 different types of errors. IC Travel Planners, HPOCs, and in some cases the Travelers themselves, will be contacted about the necessary cleanup effort. As we understand more about these errors, we are disseminating information to avoid these errors in the future.

14. Does the Traveler have to claim an ATM advance on his voucher?

No, it will be his/her personal responsibility to reconcile that with the credit card bank. The money in the advance is not owed to the traveler, but the expenses claimed in the voucher, against which the advance was applied, is owed to the traveler.

15. Why are mileage expenses sometimes missing the “dash-O” or “dash-R”?

You need to review how it was allocated on the Accounting Code Screen.

16. What are the telephone numbers for following-up (after two days) on new sponsors or new non-FTE employees?

The number for sponsors is: (301-435-2927)

The number for non-FTE employees is: (301-435-3505)

17. What do you record in the agency field when doing Conference Lodging Allowance (CLA) lodging?

Put in the IC or NIH.

18. How do you calculate the M&IE for trips that are 12-24 hours without lodging?

Trips under that ceiling receive one increment of $\frac{3}{4}$ M&IE. Trips over that ceiling receive two increments of $\frac{3}{4}$ M&IE.

19. Where do you record the cost of a “paper” ticket?

As reported in the NBS message to the Travel Community on Dec. 19 regarding splitting tickets, the cost of a paper ticket is an additional part of the cost of the ticket, not part of the TMC service fee. Be sure to include it in the Ticket Value field on the Ticketed Transportation Screen.

20. Where do you record the purpose of a trip on the Local Voucher?

Record the purpose of the trip in the Comments Box on the Local Voucher.

21. Do you document Canada as a foreign or domestic trip and how do you handle foreign taxes?

Canada must be a foreign trip and the per diem will include the usual taxes, though there may be unusual room fees or surcharges.

22. How do you route a travel document involving travel to Puerto Rico, a non-foreign OCONUS location?

NBS has identified the following non-Foreign OCONUS areas: Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, American Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, Wake Island and Johnston Atoll as CONUS by running a special sequel program after each month's per diem updates. The Authorization is then prepared as DOMESTIC Travel and the Domestic Routing list is effective for approval. The Northern Mariana Islands remain an OCONUS location.

23. How do we tell if an expense (e.g., M&IE) is in-kind on the PDF?

On the front page, you will see the expenses categories with a dash and an identifier. The identifier will be an O for Other, I for In-Kind, or R for Reimbursable. Or you can see the reimbursement category in the section of payments made by project code. For example, if the traveler's M&IE were reimbursable, it would read M&IE – R.

24. When will the Travel Community be able to delete an approved Travel Authorization?

That functionality is not planned.

25. What do you do when the Traveler reports that he cannot use the link to look at his travel document?

The workaround is for the traveler to highlight the address in the link from the email and paste it into the web address field with no space before or after it using Internet Explorer or Netscape. Also, an Administrative Officer can check the traveler's NED record to update the user name and domain. Remember that the Help Desk needs both the traveler's name and document number in order to help.

26. What do you do if a trip is cancelled and a ticket has already been issued?

Procedures for canceling a trip/ticket were forwarded to the Travel Community on Dec. 18 (see below).

OFM requests that the following steps be taken in order to facilitate the proper accounting for tickets purchased and credits received from the TMCs within the NBS.

Important: You must follow these steps only in the event that the ticket was actually issued by the TMC prior to the trip being cancelled.

- **STEP 1.** Return the ticket immediately to the TMC to ensure proper credit.
- **STEP 2.** Create and route a voucher for the amount of the ticket and the TMC service fees **ONLY** as shown on the traveler's trip itinerary from the TMC. (The rest of the expenses should be deleted from the voucher).

NOTE: The TMC will include the credit for the returned ticket on their next invoice to the NIH. When OFM processes the invoice, the credit will be recorded against the appropriate project/CAN information that was included on the original travel authorization. The credit can be viewed in the NIH Data Warehouse and on the nVision GTA Adjustment report.

27. Can you split the cost of an Omega or other TMC airfare?

Yes, procedures were forwarded to the Travel Community in a message on Dec. 19 about "splitting tickets" (see below). Omega will only accept a single ticket and CAN on the Authorization. However, you can do an Amendment to that Authorization and show two tickets at the split rates and then Voucher for the same.

- **STEP 1.** During the Authorization, on the Ticketed Transportation screen, the Planner adds the ticket citing the **total** cost and selecting a single payment method. Charge this ticket against **only one** Project Name (CAN)—either IC Project **or** Reimbursable.

- **STEP 2.** Once the authorization has been approved **AND** the **ticket has been picked up from your TMC (e.g. Omega)**, the Planner should do the following:
 - Create an **Amendment** from the Authorization
 - Go to the Ticketed Transportation screen and **delete** the original estimated ticket entry (using the 'X').
 - Use the 'ADD ticket' function to enter a ticket for **each** actual dollar amount that has a unique payment method to which it will be charged (split the ticket).
 - Make sure the 'Cost Options' area is filled out correctly (e.g. GTA-reimbursable if the sponsor is reimbursing NIH for one portion, and GTA if the IC is paying another portion).
 - Once completed, the amendment should be stamped and routed, but do not send this to Omega or other TMC. Since the amendment does not need to go through the entire routing list again, the planner may immediately call the AO to access the amendment using the 'Open Existing Documents' feature and 'approve' the amendment.
- **STEP 3.** Once approved, the planner can create a voucher from the Amended Authorization retaining the 'split ticket' cost designation.

Important: It is critical that the above instructions be followed exactly and that the **actual** costs be reflected in the amendment in order for accounting processes to flow correctly. Any variance, even a single penny, will result in additional work for the finance office.

NOTE: Regarding "Paper Tickets": Airlines charge an additional fee to process paper tickets. That charge must be added to the cost of the ticket and entered as a total in the "Ticket Value" field on the Ticketed Transportation Screen. The "paper ticket" charge is not part of the TMC service fee.